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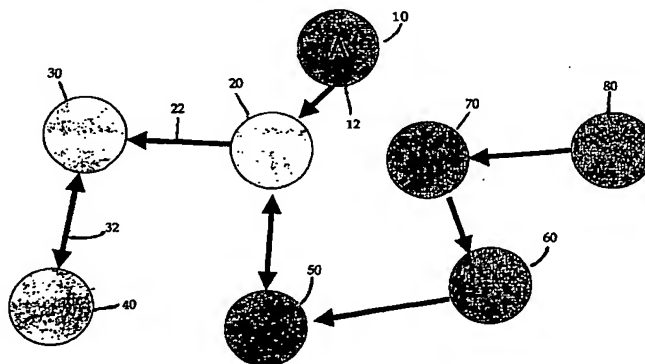
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(54) Title: METHOD FOR CONTROLLING ACCESS TO INFORMATIONAL OBJECTS

Web of Trust



(57) **Abstract:** The described embodiments of invention comprises a method and an apparatus for regulating access to objects by authorized entities. Authorized entities are entities authorized for access by either an owner entity of the regulated object or an entity authorized to authorize access to the regulated object. Each user, which may be a physical person or another information system, is identified using standard user validation techniques. When an object is first created or introduced to the system, that information is associated with an owner, who is one user on the system. The present embodiment allows the owner to define relationships with other users, either generally or regarding a particular object. The owner may or may not have trusted relationships with other users. A second user that has a trusted relationship with the owner automatically has access to the object without additional intervention by the owner. In addition, the second user may have a trusted relationship with another user. In the above example, the records administrator may have an assistant. This third user will also have access to the records. This Web of Trust may link users infinitely, but such a case would create an undue risk of compromise of the information. Thus, the present embodiment includes a facility for the owner to designate a maximum number of trusted links from the owner and other users.